

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 181115Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
SECSTATE WASHDC 6315
DEA WASHDC

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ANKARA AND ISTANBUL FOR DEA; ATHENS FOR NCO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR
SUBJECT: CYPOL SEIZURE OF LARGEST QUANTITY OF NARCOTICS FOUND IN
CYPRUS

1. ON AUGUST 17, 1977, RSO WAS INFORMED BY CYPRIOT POLICE
AUTHORITIES THAT THE LARGEST QUANTITY OF NARCOTICS DISCOVERED
IN CYPRUS WAS SEIZED ON AUGUST 9, 1977.

2. ACTING ON A TIP, POLICE CONFISCATED, IN THE AFTERNOON OF
AUGUST 9, 486 CAKES OF HASHISH WEIGHING 357 POUNDS. THE
CATCH WAS FOUND IN COASTAL WATERS OFF FAMAGUSTA NEAR POTAMOS
TIS XYLOPHAGOU. THE HASHISH WAS HIDDEN INSIDE AUTOMOBILE
TIRE TUBES WRAPPED IN SACKCLOTH.

3. POLICE PATROL BOAT SURVEILLANCE OF THE AREA WHERE THE
HASHISH WAS FOUND LED TO ARREST MORNING AUGUST 10 OF THE
FOLLOWING PERSONS WHO POLICE SUSPECT HAD COME TO RETRIEVE
THE HASHISH FROM THE TIRES: CHARALAMBOS ANDREOU MAVRIDHIS,
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AKA PAMBOS, POTATO FARMER, AGE 32, FROM XYLOPHAGOU; COSTAS
CHRISTODHOULOU OKKALIS, FISHERMAN, AGE 50, FROM XYLOPHAGOU; AND
ABDAL-HAMID MABRUK, FISHERMAN, AGE 37, FROM LEBANON AND NOW
RESIDENT OF ORMIDHIA. ALL FOUR ARE PRESENTLY IN CUSTODY OF THE
POLICE.

4. BASED ON TESTIMONY RECEIVED FROM ASPIRIS, WHO TURNED STATE'S

WITNESS, CYPOL AUTHORITIES HAVE TAGGED MAVRIDHIS AND OKKALIS AS PRIME SUSPECTS. HIRED SEEMINGLY TO BRING UP "VALUABLES" FROM THE SEA BY MAVRIDHIS AND OKKALIS, ASPIRIS UNKNOWNLY PILOTED HIS BOAT TO THE AREA WHERE THE TIRES WERE LOCATED. ACCORDING TO CYPOL AUTHORITIES, ASPIRIS IS NOT KNOWN TO HAVE HAD PRIOR CONNECTIONS WITH NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. ASPIRIS WAS RELEASED FROM CYPOL CUSTODY ON AUGUST 15.

5. MABRUK'S ROLE IN THE CASE HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED. CYPOL SOURCES HAVE INTIMATED THAT HE HAS HAD PAST ASSOCIATIONS WITH PERSONS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. HOWEVER, ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH CONCRETE EVIDENCE THAT WOULD IMPLICATED MABRUK'S DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THIS INCIDENT HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. CYPOL AUTHORITIES FEEL THAT PENDING ANY LAST MOMENT DEVELOPMENTS, MABRUK WILL BE RELEASED FROM POLICE CUSTODY ON AUGUST 17.

6. ON AUGUST 12, CYPOL ARRESTED THREE MORE PERSONS FOR SUSPECTED INVOLVEMENT BUT PLAN TO RELEASE THEM AUGUST 17 DUE TO LACK OF HARD EVIDENCE.

7. CYPOL AUTHORITIES FEEL THAT THEIR CASE AGAINST MAVRIDHIS AND OKKALIS IS "STRONG". ALTHOUGH THE TWO HAVE NOT BEEN FORMALLY CHARGED PENDING CLOSURE OF THE INVESTIGATION, CYPOL SOURCES ARE CONFIDENT MAVRIDHIS AND OKKALIS WILL BE INDICTED FOR POSSESSION OF HASHISH--A FELONY PUNISHABLE BY UP TO TEN YEARS IMPRISONMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND/OR A \$2,500 FINE.

8. FOCUS OF CYPOL INVESTIGATION HAS THUS FAR BEEN CENTERED ON DETERMINING HOW AND FROM WHERE THE HASHISH WAS TRANSPORTED TO CYPRUS, AND THE EXTENT OF ANY "CYPRUS CONNECTION." CYPOL AUTHORITIES INTIMATED THAT THEY SUSPECT THAT THE HASHISH WAS DELIVERED FROM LEBANON ULTIMATELY DESTINED FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM.

9. CYPOL AUTHORITIES DO NOT FEEL THAT THIS INCIDENT SIGNALS THAT THE USE OF CYPRUS AS A TRANSIT POINT FOR NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IS INCREASING. THEY SEE THE INCIDENT AS AN ISOLATED ONE DESIGNED SOLELY TO EXPLOIT THE SHORTAGE OF POLICE ENFORCEMENT UNITS THAT HAD BEEN TAXED WITH SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FUNERAL OF PRESIDENT MAKARIOS. CYPOL AUTHORITIES REITERATED THAT CYPRUS WILL MAINTAIN ITS FIRM COMMITMENT TO CONTROL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING.
CRAWFORD

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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